

CLAIMS

We claim:

1. A produce packaging system comprising in operative combination:
 - a basket including a basket body and a lid;
 - a latch for reversibly securing said lid to said basket body;
 - a first horizontal ventilation slot formed in an upper portion of said basket;
 - 5 a second horizontal ventilation slot formed in an upper portion of said basket, said second horizontal ventilation slot being disposed substantially perpendicular to said first horizontal ventilation slot;
 - a tray for receiving therein said basket;
 - 10 first cutaway portions defined by and disposed upon an upper portion of said tray, said first cutaway portions further disposed so as to align with said first horizontal ventilation slot; and
 - second cutaway portions defined by and disposed upon an upper portion of said tray, said second cutaway portions further disposed so as to align with said second horizontal ventilation slot.
2. A basket for use in a produce packaging system including a tray for receiving therein the basket, the tray defining at least one first cutaway portion defined by and disposed upon an upper portion of said tray and at least one second cutaway portion defined by and disposed upon said upper portion of said tray, said first cutaway portion being disposed 5 substantially perpendicular to said second cutaway portion, said basket comprising in operative combination:
 - a basket body;
 - a lid for closing said basket body;
 - a latch for reversibly securing said lid to said basket body;
 - 10 a first horizontal ventilation slot formed in an upper portion of said basket and disposed so as to align with said first cutaway portion; and
 - a second horizontal ventilation slot formed in an upper portion of said basket, said second horizontal ventilation slot being disposed substantially perpendicular to said first horizontal ventilation slot and disposed so as to align with said second cutaway portion.

3. The basket of claim 2 wherein said basket further comprises an upper vent.

4. The basket of claim 3 wherein said upper vent is disposed on a substantially upper portion of said lid.

5. The basket of claim 2 wherein said basket further comprises an lower vent.

6. The basket of claim 5 wherein said lower vent is disposed on a substantially lower portion of said basket body.

7. The basket of claim 2 wherein said basket body and said lid in operative combination further define, when said lid is positioned in a secured position with respect to said basket body, at least one of said first horizontal ventilation slot and said second horizontal ventilation slot.

8. The basket of claim 2 wherein said basket body further defines at least one of said first horizontal ventilation slot and said second horizontal ventilation slot.

9. The basket of claim 2 wherein said lid further defines at least one of said first horizontal ventilation slot and said second horizontal ventilation slot.

10. The basket of claim 2 wherein said latch wherein said latch is selected from the group consisting of: edge catch, button catch, snap, hook-and-loop closure, shrinkwrap banding, elastic band, and adhesive tape.

11. The basket of claim 2 wherein said latch further comprises a pair of toothed vertically mating latches including a first engageable tooth disposed upon said basket body and a second engageable tooth disposed upon said lid.

12. The basket of claim 11 wherein said latch further comprises a plurality of pairs of toothed vertically mating latches.

12. The basket of claim 2 wherein said basket is a one-piece structure, said basket defining both said basket body and said lid as an integral unit.

14. The basket of claim 13 wherein said basket further defines a flexible hinge joining said basket body and said lid.

15. The basket of claim 14 wherein at least one of said first horizontal ventilation slot and said second horizontal ventilation slot is defined in said flexible hinge.

16. A tray for use in a produce packaging system including a basket, the tray for receiving therein said basket, said basket including a basket body and a lid, a latch for reversibly securing said lid to said basket body, a first horizontal ventilation slot formed in an upper portion of said basket and a second horizontal ventilation slot formed in an upper portion of said basket, said second horizontal ventilation slot being disposed substantially perpendicular to said first horizontal ventilation slot, the tray comprising in operative combination:

first cutaway portion defined by and disposed upon an upper portion of said tray, said first cutaway portions further disposed so as to align with said first horizontal ventilation slot; and

second cutaway portions defined by and disposed upon an upper portion of said tray, said second cutaway portion being disposed substantially perpendicular to said first cutaway portion, further disposed so as to align with said second horizontal ventilation slot.

17. The tray of claim 16 wherein said tray further comprises a bottom, first and second ends, and first and second sides.

18. The tray of claim 17 further comprising a tab formed in an upper portion of at least one of said first and second ends.

19. The tray of claim 18 further comprising a receptacle formed in a lower portion of at least one of said first and second ends, said receptacle for receiving therein said tab formed in a second tray.

20. A produce packaging system comprising in operative combination:

a basket including a basket body and a lid;

a latch for reversibly securing said lid to said basket body;

a ventilation channel formed in a lower surface of said basket body;

5 a first horizontal ventilation slot formed in an upper portion of said basket;

a second horizontal ventilation slot formed in an upper portion of said basket, said second horizontal ventilation slot being disposed substantially perpendicular to said first horizontal ventilation slot;

10 a lower vent further disposed on said lower surface of said basket body in communication with said ventilation channel;

15 a tray for receiving therein said basket, said tray defining paired lower tray vents disposed upon a lower portion of said tray, said lower tray vents further disposed so as to align with said ventilation channel when said basket is installed in said tray;

first cutaway portion defined by and disposed upon an upper portion of said tray, said first cutaway portion further disposed so as to align with said first horizontal ventilation slot; and

20 second cutaway portion defined by and disposed upon an upper portion of said tray, said second cutaway portion further disposed so as to align with said second horizontal ventilation slot.

21. A basket for use in a produce packaging system including a tray for receiving therein said basket, said tray defining paired lower tray vents disposed upon a lower portion of said tray, first cutaway portions defined by and disposed upon an upper portion of said tray, and second cutaway portions defined by and disposed upon an upper portion of said tray, said basket comprising, in operative combination:

5 a basket body:

a lid for closing said basket body;
a latch for reversibly securing said lid to said basket body;
a ventilation channel formed in a lower surface of said basket body;
a lower vent further disposed on said lower surface of said basket body
in communication with said ventilation channel;
a first horizontal ventilation slot formed in an upper portion of said
basket; and

a second horizontal ventilation slot formed in an upper portion of said
basket, said second horizontal ventilation slot being disposed substantially
perpendicular to said first horizontal ventilation slot.

22. The basket of claim 21 wherein said upper vent is disposed on a substantially
upper portion of said lid.

23. The basket of claim 21 wherein said basket body and said lid in operative
combination further define, when said lid is positioned in a secured position with respect to
said basket body, at least one of said first horizontal ventilation slot and said second
horizontal ventilation slot.

24. The basket of claim 21 wherein said basket body further defines at least one of
said first horizontal ventilation slot and said second horizontal ventilation slot.

25. The basket of claim 21 wherein said lid further defines at least one of said first
horizontal ventilation slot and said second horizontal ventilation slot.

26. The basket of claim 21 wherein said latch further comprises a pair of toothed
vertically mating latches including a first engageable tooth disposed upon said basket body
and a second engageable tooth disposed upon said lid.

27. The basket of claim 26 wherein said latch further comprises a plurality of
pairs of toothed vertically mating latches.

28. The basket of claim 21 wherein said basket is a one-piece structure, said basket defining both said basket body and said lid as an integral unit.

29. The basket of claim 28 wherein said basket further defines a flexible hinge joining said basket body and said lid.

30. The basket of claim 29 wherein at least one of said first horizontal ventilation slot and said second horizontal ventilation slot is defined in said flexible hinge.

31. A tray for use in a produce packaging system including a basket, the tray for receiving therein said basket, said basket including a basket body and a lid, a latch for reversibly securing said lid to said basket body, a ventilation channel formed in a lower surface of said basket body, a first horizontal ventilation slot formed in an upper portion of said basket and a second horizontal ventilation slot formed in an upper portion of said basket, said second horizontal ventilation slot being disposed substantially perpendicular to said first horizontal ventilation slot, the tray comprising in operative combination:

10 a lower tray vent disposed upon a lower portion of said tray, said lower tray vents further disposed so as to align with said ventilation channel when said basket is installed in said tray;

a first cutaway portion defined by and disposed upon an upper portion of said tray, said first cutaway portion further disposed so as to align with said first horizontal ventilation slot; and

15 a second cutaway portion defined by and disposed upon an upper portion of said tray and being disposed substantially perpendicular to said first cutaway portion, said second cutaway portion further disposed so as to align with said second horizontal ventilation slot.

32. The tray of claim 31 wherein said tray further comprises a bottom, first and second ends, and first and second sides.

33. The tray of claim 32 further comprising a tab formed in an upper portion of at least one of said first and second ends.

34. The tray of claim 32 further comprising a receptacle formed in a lower portion of at least one of said first and second ends, said receptacle for receiving therein said tab formed in a second tray.

35. A produce packaging system comprising in operative combination:

a basket including a basket body and a lid;

a latch for reversibly securing the lid to the basket body;

5 a ventilation channel formed in a lower surface of the basket body to align with the lower tray vents when the basket is installed in the tray;

a first horizontal ventilation slot formed in an upper portion of the basket to align with the first cutaway portions of the tray when the basket is installed in the tray;

10 a second horizontal ventilation slot formed in an upper portion of the basket, the second horizontal ventilation slot being disposed substantially perpendicular to the first horizontal ventilation slot and formed to align with the second cutaway portions of the tray when the basket is installed in the tray;

15 a lower vent further disposed on the lower surface of the basket body in communication with the ventilation channel;

a tray for receiving therein the basket, the tray comprising a bottom, first and second ends and first and second sides;

20 paired lower tray vents disposed on a lower portion of the first and second ends, the lower tray vents further disposed so as to align with the ventilation channel when the basket is installed in the tray;

first cutaway portions defined by and disposed upon an upper portion of the tray and disposed so as to align with the first horizontal ventilation slot when the basket is installed in the tray; and

25 second cutaway portions defined by and disposed upon an upper portion of the tray and disposed so as to align with the second horizontal ventilation slot when the basket is installed in the tray.

36. A basket for use in a produce packaging system including a tray for receiving therein the basket, the tray defining paired lower tray vents disposed upon a lower portion of the tray, first cutaway portions defined by and disposed upon an upper portion of the tray and second cutaway portions defined by and disposed upon an upper portion of the tray, the basket comprising in operative combination:

10 a basket including a basket body and a lid;

a latch for reversibly securing the lid to the basket body;

15 a ventilation channel formed in a lower surface of the basket body to align with the lower tray vents when the basket is installed in the tray;

a first horizontal ventilation slot formed in an upper portion of the basket to align with the first cutaway portions of the tray when the basket is installed in the tray;

20 a second horizontal ventilation slot formed in an upper portion of the basket, the second horizontal ventilation slot being disposed substantially perpendicular to the first horizontal ventilation slot and formed to align with the second cutaway portions of the tray when the basket is installed in the tray; and

a lower vent further disposed on the lower surface of the basket body in communication with the ventilation channel.

37. A tray for use in a produce packaging system including a basket receivable into said tray, the basket including a basket body and a lid, a latch for reversibly securing the lid to the basket body, a ventilation channel formed in a lower surface of the basket body, a first horizontal ventilation slot formed in an upper portion of the basket, a second horizontal ventilation slot formed in an upper portion of the basket, the second horizontal ventilation slot being disposed substantially perpendicular to the first horizontal ventilation slot and a lower vent further disposed on the lower surface of the basket body in communication with the ventilation channel, the tray comprising, in operative combination:

10 a tray for receiving therein the basket, the tray comprising a bottom, first and second ends and first and second sides;

15 paired lower tray vents disposed on a lower portion of the first and second ends, the lower tray vents further disposed so as to align with the ventilation channel when the basket is installed in the tray;

first cutaway portions defined by and disposed upon an upper portion of the tray and disposed so as to align with the first horizontal ventilation slot when the basket is installed in the tray; and

second cutaway portions defined by and disposed upon an upper portion of the tray and disposed so as to align with the second horizontal ventilation slot when the basket is installed in the tray.